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# ANSWER

TO THE

# DEFENCE

OF THE

Dissertation or Enquiry concerning  
the Gospel according to S. *Matthew*.

*In a Letter to a young Gentleman.*

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By the Author of the *Letter to a Lady*.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for R. KNAPLOCK, at the *Bishop's*  
*Head* in St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCXXXIII.

AN  
ANSWER  
TO THE  
DEFENCE

OF THE

Dissertation of Brady concerning  
the Gospel according to St. Matthew.  
In a Letter to a young Gentleman.

By the Author  
to a Lady.



L O N D O N :

Printed for R. Knaplock, at the  
St. Paul's Church-yard, 1733.



S I R,



YOU cannot, I suppose, have forgotten the Conversation that passed at ——— when you express'd some Hope, that the Letter I had printed might have a good Influence on the Author of the *Dissertation*; and that if he thought fit to publish any thing further, he wou'd at least be more careful as to the Truth of his Facts, and the Fairness of his Quotations. The Lady to whom that Letter was wrote added, " If he has any Regard to  
" his own Professions of Sincerity in his Enquiry after Truth, he must certainly write in a  
" quite different manner from what he has done  
" in this Piece; and surely for his own Credit  
" sake, if he appears in Print again, he'll not  
" assert things which are so easily confuted."  
Mr. N \* \* who stood by, smil'd, and being importun'd to give us his Thoughts, said, " If I  
" have any Judgment, it was not a young Author wrote the *Dissertation*, but one who has  
" long impos'd both on himself and his Readers;  
" one who is so accuslom'd to examine things  
" slightly, apprehend them by halves, and rea-



“son from his own Misapprehensions, that no-  
 “thing is to be expected from him, but mista-  
 “ken Facts, false Citations, and wrong Conclu-  
 “sions.” Your Eyes were then turn’d upon me,  
 expecting my Sentiments; but as I desir’d leave  
 to suspend the giving my Opinion, and wait the  
 Event, you were so kind to excuse me. *The De-*  
*fence of the Dissertation*, Sir, is now publish’d;  
 and I am sorry to find Mr. N \* \* has so much  
 Reason given him to say, that his Conjecture  
 was not groundless. Has the Author acknow-  
 ledg’d any one Mistake, retracted any one Posi-  
 tion, or rectified any one of those many Misre-  
 presentations he was convicted of? No; but  
 proceeds with the same——Negligence, shall  
 I say? I beg Mr. N \* \*’s Pardon; there’s too  
 much Evidence of its being Wilfulness, to mis-  
 quote and misrepresent his Opponents; as I shall  
 fully shew you in some brief Remarks on that  
 Part of the Book which relates to my Letter.

The very first Sentence he pretends to quote  
 from me is his own Invention: “He tells her  
 “(*i. e.* I tell the Lady to whom the Letter is  
 “written) that she need not be in pain, for her  
 “Grandson understands the Languages of the  
 “ancient Authors he cites”. Not a word is  
 added of the Page where this notable Saying of  
 mine is to be found, lest his Reader’s Curiosity  
 shou’d lead him to consult the Place, and con-  
 vict him of Falshood. Had he introduc’d me  
 telling her, “That she need not be in pain, for  
 “the Author of *the Dissertation* understands not  
 “the Languages of the ancient Authors he cites,”  
 he had made me talk much more sensibly, and it  
 may be not far from the Truth.

He



He represents me as contradicting myself<sup>b</sup>; but how is that effected? By omitting the word on which the whole Stress of the latter of the two Sentences quoted by him lies. As in *the Dissertation* he forged the word *all*, to make my Lord of London fail of his Promise; so in *the Defence* he suppresses the word *all*, to make me guilty of a Contradiction<sup>c</sup>.

He speaks of me as *railing heartily at the Author of the Dissertation, uncharitably considering him as an irreclaimable Heretick*; and says, *I spend at least three parts of my Scribble in Language the most vile and abusive, that impotent, sacerdotal Malice cou'd invent; or else in little Cavils and Criticisms, beneath a Man of Sense, and which arise (many of them) from my own Ignorance and Mistakes.* Whether this be a true Representation, I leave wholly to be determin'd by those who have read, or shall hereafter think fit to read *the Letter to a Lady*. And if it be not true, let any one judge whether this be civil Language, or be not rather a flagrant Instance of *impotent Lay Malice*.

In *the Dissertation* he had said, *Paul fairly owns himself ignorant in the Greek, 2 Cor. xi. 6. which, it seems, though born in a Grecian City, by his long Stay in Judæa, he had in great Measure forgot*<sup>d</sup>. This I produc'd as one Instance of a Misrepresentation, adding "Would not any Person unacquainted with the Writings of St. Paul, conclude from hence, that he had given this Information of himself in the Place cited? But is there any one Word that implies either that Greek was his Mother-Tongue, or that he had forgot it, or that has relation to any one particular

<sup>b</sup> Def. of the Dissert. p. 69.

<sup>c</sup> Lett. to a Lady, p. 4; 5.

<sup>d</sup> Dissert. p. 40. marg. Note.

" particular Language more than another? Is not  
 " the whole that is there said, that *he was rude*  
 " *in Speech, i. e. a mean Speaker, whatever were*  
 " the Language he talk'd in?" \* This in *the*  
*Defence* is imputed to my *Ignorance*, because *the*  
*Dissertation-Writer*, forsooth, " comments in *the*  
 " very Words of the ablest Critick and Divine of  
 " the present Age, and in the *Sense* of the greatest  
 " Doctors the Church ever had, who have ac-  
 " knowledg'd *Paul's* unskilfulness in the *Greek*." †  
 Pray, Sir, be so good to consult the *Greek* Com-  
 mentators upon these Words of *St. Paul*. *Chry-*  
*ostom*, *Theodorit*, *Oecumenius*, and *Theophylact*, put  
 no such Sense upon them. Look into *Pool's Syn.*  
*Crit. into Musculus*, *Cajetan*, *Piscator*, *Twinnus*, *Beza*,  
*Whitby*, *Locke*. Not one of these put any such  
 Sense upon *St. Paul's* Words. However, it  
 seems *the ablest Critick and Divine of the present*  
*Age* does, and that is *Mr. Le Clerc*, in his 2d *Lett.*  
*Insp.* \* But how is it known that *the Letters upon*  
*the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures* were written  
 by *Mr. Le Clerc*? Does he set his Name to them,  
 or has he own'd them? Should we with *Father*  
*Simon* ascribe the greatest Part of a Book entitl'd,  
*Sentiments de quelque Theologiens de Hollande*, &c.  
 from whence these Letters are translated, to  
*Mr. Le Clerc*, yet since the Author of that Book  
 expressly tells us, that he receiv'd these Discourses  
 upon Inspiration from his Friend *Mr. N.* and  
 gives us them in his very Words, what Evidence  
 is there that they belong to *Mr. Le Clerc*? If  
*Father Simon's* Intelligence were true, this *Mr. N.*  
 was one *Noel Aubert de Versé*. So that you see  
 it's wholly owing to our Author's *Ignorance*,  
 that he says *the Dissertation-Writer* commented in  
 the

\* *Lett. to a Lady*, p. 10.

† *Def. of the Dissert.* p. 69, 70.

‡ *Def. of the Dissert.* p. 69, 70. *marg. Note.*

*the very Words of Mr. Le Clerc.* And supposing he had; this same Mr. *Le Clerc*, many, I think at least eighteen Years after this, when we must in Charity believe him a much wiser Man, printed a Translation of the *Greek Testament* into *French*, with short Notes: In his Note upon this Verse, he refers us to 1 *Cor.* ii. 1, 4. justly concluding that the Apostle's Meaning is the same in both Places; and explains it as other Commentators do, that *St. Paul* spake not with the Elegance of an Orator, but in the Language of the common People. In his Supplement to Dr. *Hammond's* Annotations, he has a long Note to the same Purpose. *St. Jerome* is the only Author I have met with who confines these Words of *St. Paul* to the *Greek Language*. And the Amount of all that he says is, that he wanted Eloquence in this Language; and even herein he contradicts himself; as you will easily see by comparing these several Places together. *Jer. adv. Ruf. lib. 1. Epist. ad Marcellam ap. fin. Catal. Script. Eccl. in Paulum. Hedibie q. 11. Algasia q. 10. in epist. ad Gal. cap. 6.*

Our Author imputes it to me as an Instance of great Assurance, that I will not take it upon his bare Word, that *the Fathers were the Model-lers of the Christian Religion*, and that I dare suspend my Belief hereof till he has proved them such<sup>b</sup>. Impudence with a witness! Not to credit what so strict an Adherer to Truth has asserted! But I know not how it is, I seldom find my self dispos'd to give into the firm Belief of Things, till I see at least some probable Evidence of the Truth of them. It is my Infirmary, I hope he'll bear with me in it; and so much the rather, in the

<sup>b</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 70. comp. with the Lett. to a Lady, p. 13.



the present Case, because he himself has laid no small Difficulty in my way ; for if I understand rightly, *he has the Face also to deny that the Fathers were the Modellers of the Christian Religion, i. e. as he explains it, of the fundamental Articles relating to it*<sup>1</sup>. The Fathers spoken of, are those quoted by the Bishop of London, who liv'd before the Time of Creed-making, mention'd by him, p. 17. *Def.* of whom he expressly affirms, that *they were heterodox in Opinion, even with regard to Essentials*<sup>2</sup>. And again, *That not only those, but every single Father before the second general Council (held, Anno 381.) were rank Hereticks, and Enemies to the Catholick Faith*<sup>3</sup>. How these Men could be the Modellers of that Religion they are brought to vindicate<sup>m</sup>, framing the fundamental Articles relating to it, and at the same time err in the capital Articles of the Catholick Faith<sup>n</sup>, be rank Hereticks, and Enemies to it, I must leave him to make out.

He represents me " so little read in Church-History, as not to know that St. John wrote his Gospel to supply the Defects in the other Three ; and more particularly with respect to those most necessary and essential Articles of Jesus's Divinity and Incarnation, which they had omitted o." That St. John has related in his Gospel many of our Lord's Sayings and Works omitted by the other three Evangelists, I asserted ; that any thing necessary to Salvation was omitted by them, I told him the Authors he quoted did not prove<sup>p</sup>. If he would have said any thing to the Purpose, he should have shewn that the Authors he had produc'd did prove

<sup>1</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 33.

<sup>p</sup> Letter to a Lady, p. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Diff. p. 74.

<sup>m</sup> Diff. p. 26.

<sup>o</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 70.

prove this. They are *Euseb. E. H. l. 3. c. 24. Clem. Alex. apud eund. l. 6. c. 14. Jer. catal. vir. ill. in Joan. Epiph. Her. 2. Alog. n. 12.* I refer it to you, Sir, or to any other that will be at the Trouble to search, whether these Authors affirm that *any necessary and essential Articles of Faith* were omitted by the three first Evangelists. The Objection aim'd at by our Author is set in a much stronger Light by the Emperor *Julian*, and fully answer'd by *Cyril*, who clearly proves that each of the Evangelists say enough to lead us to the Belief of our Saviour's Divinity. *Cyr. cont. Jul. l. 10.*

The next Charge he brings against me is the  
 “ drawing a Parallel, which immediately infers  
 “ our Saviour to have been a very Rebel, as ha-  
 “ ving set himself up for *King of Judea*, and  
 “ consequently to have been justly condemn'd on  
 “ that Account &c.” I need only repeat the Pas-  
 sage referr'd to, to shew his Injustice, and my  
 own Innocence : The Words are these. “ Were  
 “ any one in *Ireland* condemn'd for High-Trea-  
 “ son, as having set himself up for King of that  
 “ Country, think you the Lords Justices would  
 “ not give a full Account of it to our Court?  
 “ And was not this the very Case in *Judea* ? ”  
 Will this Author say that no one was ever con-  
 demn'd for a Crime of which he was innocent ?  
 And have I put the Case that the Man was guilty ?  
 No; that he was condemn'd. For what Crime ?  
 For having set himself up as King of the Coun-  
 try. And is it not so far parallel ? Sure he will  
 not deny that our Saviour was accus'd of the like  
 Crime by the Chief Priests, and condemn'd upon  
 their Accusation.

B

He

Def. of the Diff. p. 70. : Lett. to a Lady, p. 24.

He says, I “ insinuate that *Celsus*, *Porphyrus*,  
 “ and the Emperor *Julian* knew the Gospels  
 “ were compil’d by those whose Names they  
 “ bear ; tho’ Christians could not agree in this  
 “ Matter among themselves ; and tho’ the Phi-  
 “ losopher *Celsus* (who ’tis suppos’d flourish’d  
 “ about *Trajan’s* Time) accuses Christians so  
 “ early with altering their Gospels every Turn,  
 “ and consequently framing new ones, as they saw  
 “ Occasion .” Observing that the Author of  
*the Dissertation* had a peculiar Regard for Fa-  
 ther *Simon*, I quoted these Sayings from him,  
*That neither Celsus, Porphyrus, nor the Emperor*  
*Julian, who opposed the Gospels with all their*  
*Might, denied them to be truly theirs, whose Names*  
*they bear——When Julian speaks of the Gospel of*  
*of St. John, he does not deny it to be his whose*  
*Name it bears, but accuses this Apostle of having*  
*introduc’d Novelties into the Christian Religion.*  
 I then added, “ Those Enemies of Christianity  
 “ who lived so much nearer the Time when  
 “ the Gospels were wrote, and had so much  
 “ better Opportunity of informing themselves  
 “ in the Truth, had they been able so much  
 “ as to have rais’d a Suspicion that they were  
 “ not written by these Persons to whom they  
 “ are ascrib’d, think you they would not have  
 “ done it? *Julian*, who himself had been a Chri-  
 “ stian, and knew how much depended on it,  
 “ would not he have done it? He was too well  
 “ assur’d of the Truth of the Fact, and too  
 “ well appriz’d of the Evidence on which it  
 “ rested, to attempt it.” What does the Au-  
 thor of *the Defence* alledge against this? *That the*  
*Christians could not agree in this Matter among them-*  
*selves.* The only Instances he has produc’d of Chri-



Christians who have denied that any of the Gospels were written by those whose Names are prefix'd, are the *Alogi*, and *Faustus the Manichean*; the former absurdly ascribing the Gospel of St. *John* to the very Person against whom it was written; and the latter denying St. *Matthew* to be the Author of the Gospel under his Name, for trifling Reasons, without determining who was the Author. Of this I have taken sufficient Notice in my former Letter; \* wherein I have also fully prov'd that all the Churches founded by the Apostles, together with all those that held Communion with them, were unanimous in this Point \*. Even the Hereticks, since they profess'd themselves wiser than the Apostles, might without any Inconsistence acknowledge the Gospels rejected by them to be the genuine Works of those whose Names they bore, and it's probable they generally did. Upon the same Principle they made Alterations in the Gospels they receiv'd; which is the other thing alledg'd by our Author against my Reasoning. *The Philosopher Cellus accuses Christians so early as Trajan's Time, with altering their Gospels every Turn, and consequently framing new ones as they saw Occasion.* The Consequence here is entirely of his own drawing, and no part of the Words of *Cellus*. Let us hear *Origen's* Answer. " I know  
 " not any that have alter'd the Gospel, unless  
 " the Disciples of *Marcion* and *Valentinus*; and  
 " I think also those of *Lucian*. This is not a  
 " Crime to be charged on the Christian Doctrine,  
 " but on those who were so wicked to corrupt  
 " the Gospels. For as Philosophy is not to be  
 " blamed, because of the *Sophists*, the *Epicure-*  
 B 2 *ans,*

\* Lett. to a Lady. p. 32—36. & 113, 114.

\* Letter to a Lady. p. 57—72.

“ and, the *Peripateticks*, or any other who may  
 “ maintain false Opinions : so is it no Reflection  
 “ upon Christianity, that there are those who  
 “ alter the Gospels, and introduce Heresies fo-  
 “ reign to the Intention of Christ's Doctrine.”

I would fain learn how this Passage of *Celsus* any ways affects what I have said. Tho' *Celsus* knew that some Christians (for it is of some<sup>y</sup> only that he expresses himself) alter'd the Gospel, does it follow from thence, that he was in doubt who were the Authors of the Four Gospels? Might he not know this, and yet be fully convinc'd that the Evidence for the Authors of the Four Gospels was so clear and strong, that it was in vain to dispute it?

In his next Words, our Author again accuses me of Assurance and Ignorance; but whether it be He or I is the guilty Person, the Reader must judge. *This Letter-Writer has the Assurance, p. 28, 29. to deny Christians ever destroy'd the Heathen, or suppress'd or alter'd one another's Writings; as having never heard of Imperial Edicts, or Decrees of Councils for that purpose; or that Priests themselves have confess'd the Fact, and accus'd one another for the same Crime.* The Passage refer'd to is this; “ The Author of the Dissertation in-  
 “ lists much on it, that the Writings of Heathens,  
 “ Jews and Christians, which any way glanced at  
 “ our present Christianity, have been all destroy'd  
 “ by primitive Zealots, who made it their Merit so  
 “ to do. Of this he alledges no Proof; and I  
 “ have already observ'd, that in another place  
 “ we find him in part unsaying it. Indeed I the  
 “ more suspect the Truth of it, because he speaks  
 “ of it as a thing known to the Bishop; for his  
 “ saying, &c. Is there one word in this Passage,

or

or in my whole Book, of *Christians suppressing and altering one another's Writings*? Or is it there denied, that *Christians have destroyed Writings of the Heathen*? The most that's insinuated is, that I suspect the Truth of that universal Destruction asserted, *That ALL the Writings, both of Heathens, Jews, and even of primitive Christians, which any way glanced at our present Christianity, have been actually destroyed*. I had various good Reasons to suspend my Belief of this; however, when he makes the Truth of it appear, I shall most readily acknowledge it. In the mean time, I have plain Evidence that he does not give credit to it himself. He asserts, "That what *Tacitus*, *Suetonius* and *Pliny* say of Christ, is little "for their Credit<sup>a</sup>"; and yet their Writings are not actually destroy'd. Of the primitive Writers quoted by my Lord of *London*, he affirms, "That they were heterodox in Opinion, and "Infidels with regard to the Essentials of our "present Christianity<sup>b</sup>"; and yet these heretical Writings are not actually destroy'd. In *the Defence* he grows bolder, and says, "I take upon "me to affirm, that not only these cited by the "Bishop, but every single Father before the second General Council (held *Anno* 381) were "rank Hereticks, and Enemies to the Catholick "Church, i. e. as Catholicism now goes, not "excepting the great *Athanasius* himself<sup>c</sup>". And yet he well knows, that many of their Writings, which he censures as heretical, are yet extant. He says, "Some of the Works of the Emperor "*Julian* still remain;" and for an Instance quotes a Passage preserv'd by *Cyril*. And are not the Works of *Celsus* preserv'd in the same manner by *Origen*?

<sup>a</sup> Dissert. p. 16.

<sup>b</sup> Dissert. p. 14.

<sup>c</sup> Dissert. p. 74.

<sup>d</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 32.



*Origen?* and some few of *Porphyry's* by *Jerome?* to the no small Advantage of Infidel Writers, who constantly take the sharpest Weapons from their Quivers. Notwithstanding, our Author says in the very same Sentence, "that the Writings of *Porphyry* and *Celsus* are all destroy'd<sup>d</sup>." Such a careless way of writing you'll not match in the meanest of those Authors, of whom he is pleas'd to speak with so much Contempt.

You who have so often been Witness to my pleading for the Freedom of the Press in our own Nation, have heard me speak with great Indignation of those Laws which were made by Christian Emperors against the Writings of *Porphyry*, the Heathen, and those of *Arius*, and other Hereticks; because I think the destroying Writings, which contain in them nothing contrary to the Civil Government or Peace of the State, to be a manifest Injury to those who possess and value them; because these Laws in particular have given a Handle to our modern Infidels, to suspect that there was more said against Christianity than now appears; because I shou'd have been as well pleas'd as any Infidel, to have seen the utmost that was ever urg'd against Christianity, or that was said by any Sect of Christians in their own behalf. And yet at the same time I have told you, that had there been no Law made against any of those Writings, I much question whether there wou'd have come down to us one more than we now have. Neglect is a far greater Enemy to Books than Imperial Edicts, and has made an infinitely wider Destruction. The Reason is obvious. When a Book is highly valu'd by any particular Sect, Laws prohibiting the Use of that Book make them the more tenaci-

ous

ous of it, and they use the greater Art to preserve it; but when the Sect is, by Length of Time, dwindled away, and there are no longer Persons who have a particular Regard for this Book; it's wholly neglected, and of course perishes.

Our Author proceeds: "He (*speaking of me*) "is willing to persuade, p. 40. that the Eyan-  
"gelists were not mean and illiterate, contrary  
"to all Church Testimony; or that our Dioce-  
"san ever intended to cast such an injurious Re-  
"flection on them." I desire the Reader to turn to the Passage, and leave it wholly to his Judgment, whether I have said or insinuated any thing wrong. I willingly leave it to the Reader also to determine, whether there be any Arguments in *the Letter to a Lady*; and if there be, whether they are not almost wholly neglected by the Author of *the Defence*; because he adds, "If this  
"Gentleman hath any Argument, he will find  
"it not neglected in one or other Part of this  
"Treatise." The following Remarks contain Answers to all therein that I apprehend can be esteemed Objections to any thing I have said.

He asserts, "That the Acts of *Pilate*, appeal'd  
"to by *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, are still ex-  
"tant." Wou'd he make this Assertion good, the learned World wou'd, no doubt, make him their grateful Acknowledgments. He pronounces roundly, that *these Acts were forged*<sup>e</sup>. But we want Proof. He says, "'Tis certain, no one  
"ever saw any publick Acts or Registries of that  
"sort; no, not after the Emperors became  
"Christians." But how does he know? Some Persons might have read them, and the Notice of it not be convey'd down to us. And if they were not seen by any after the Emperors became

<sup>e</sup> Def. of Diff. p. 13.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid.

<sup>g</sup> Def. of Diff. p. 12.

Christians, it was no doubt because they were destroy'd before that Time. We know that *Acts of Pilate*, highly reflecting on our blessed Saviour, were forged by the Heathen under the Emperor *Maximinus*, and by his Authority spread through his whole Dominion; and even Children were taught to say them by-heart in the Schools<sup>h</sup>. Can we suppose that those who stuck not to publish false Records, would scruple to destroy the true ones? What is it to be thought that Princes, such bitter Enemies to the Christian Name as were *Dioclesian* and *Maximin*, would not do? This is far therefore from being a *sure Proof* that there never were any such publick Acts or Registries as he affirms it to be<sup>i</sup>.

He imagines that the Argument drawn from the Silence of our antient Adversaries, implies in it, that they were convinc'd of the Truth of all the Facts related in the Gospels<sup>k</sup>; whereas the only Thing implied in it is, that they were Men of common Sense, who, if they could have pluck'd up the Tree by the Roots, would not have spent their Time fruitlessly in stripping its outward Branches of a few Leaves. Could they have prov'd that there never was such a Person as Jesus, or that he wrought no Cures, or that he was not crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, or that he did not rise from the Dead, or that he left no Disciples behind him, or that his Disciples met with no Success in their Preaching, and founded no Churches, or that the Apostles *Matthew* and *John* were not the Authors of the Gospels which go under their Names; I say, could they have made out any of these Things, is it to be thought they would not have done it? Were they so childish,

<sup>h</sup> Euseb. E. H. l. 9. c. 5.

<sup>i</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 11.



childish, when they might have overturn'd the Foundation, to employ themselves only in battering some small Part of the Superstructure? No, Sir, we believe they were Men of better Sense; and if we do them too much Honour herein, we hope our modern Infidels will forgive us. The utmost we take for granted by using this Argument is, that if they cou'd have disprov'd these main Facts, they certainly wou'd. Since therefore we find not that they ever attempted it, we are fully persuaded it was out of their Power. How far they made it their Business to search into them, and were convinc'd of their Truth, we take not upon us to say; tho' no doubt some of them wanted not Inclination to make all the Discoveries against us they were able. That our Adversaries never denied the principal Facts of the Gospel History, he wou'd have us believe, proceeded from an utter Contempt and Neglect of them, agreeable TO THEIR KNOWN TREATMENT OF Christians in those Days<sup>a</sup>. What he means by those Days, is not easy to conjecture; such a Jumble of Times is there put together in his Text and Margin. If he means the Time of Tacitus, witness the dreadful Persecution of Christians under Nero; if he means the Time of Pliny, witness the Persecution under Trajan; if he means the Time of Porphyry, witness the Persecution under Decius. That the Christians were treated with more Malice than Contempt by their heathen Adversaries, is sufficiently evident from the seven other noted Persecutions, from the Martyrdom of Justin procur'd by Crescens the Philosopher<sup>b</sup>, and from the Hardships laid upon Christians by the Emperor Julian<sup>c</sup>. From what has been said, any one may immediately discern the

C

true

<sup>a</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 10.    <sup>b</sup> Euseb. Eccl. H. l. 4. c. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Amm. Marc. l. 25. c. 5. & Socr. E. H. l. 3. c. 12.

true Similitude between the Silence of *Jewish* or heathen Authors concerning the Slaughter of the Infants, and their not denying the principal Facts of the Gospel History; which our Author not understanding, thinks will make for his Cause, and begins to triumph<sup>d</sup>. The same Enmity against Christians, which wou'd have push'd them on to disprove the principal Facts of the Gospel History, had they been able, was a manifest Temptation to them to conceal their Knowledge of them when they cou'd not. The Emperor *Julian* is quoted as saying, that "the Christian Religion is a human Contrivance, and an Impo-  
 " sition on Mankind, supported by prodigious  
 " Stories<sup>e</sup>." What cou'd he say less, when he forsook it, and turn'd Heathen? But does he any where deny, that there was such a Person as *Jesus*, who wrought Cures, and suffer'd under *Pontius Pilate*? Does he not plainly take those Facts for granted? As for Instance; having mention'd what *Perseus*, *Æacus*, and *Minos* had done, he adds, "That *Jesus* had done nothing whilst he  
 " liv'd worthy of Fame, unless one supposes that  
 " to cure the Lame and Blind, and to adjure the  
 " Dæmoniacks in the Towns of *Bethsaida* and  
 " *Bethany*, were the greatest of Works<sup>f</sup>." Might not then my Lord of *London* justly say, *that Julian never denied that there was such a Person as Jesus, or affirmed that there was no Foundation for the Truth of the Gospel History*; meaning it of these and other Facts, which he always takes for granted? My Lord does not say that *Julian* never affirmed, that there was no Foundation for the Truth of the Christian Religion, that he professes to have believ'd a *human Invention*; but that he never affirmed, there was no

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Founda-

<sup>d</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 50.  
 marg. Note.

<sup>e</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 61.

<sup>f</sup> Cyr. cont. Jul. l. 6.

Foundation for the Truth of the Gospel History; and is it not evident, that the fundamental Facts of that History he attempts not to disprove, and fairly allows? Our Author extols *Julian* as "a Person of a noble and exalted Genius<sup>g</sup>." Wou'd he have us follow the Example of his Hero; and at the same time we reject the Gospel, give into all the Superstition of the antient Heathen? censure Christianity as a human Invention, and honour all the Tricks of the Augurs and Aruspices as divine? Any one who is willing to see a Specimen of the Superstition and Credulity of the Emperor *Julian*, may consult the Places referr'd to in the Margin<sup>h</sup>.

This Writer attacks the Authority of *Clement's* second Epistle, and of the Fragments ascrib'd to *Polycarp*<sup>i</sup>. The former is defended by *Cotelerius*. My Lord of *London*, in a subsequent Edition of his third Pastoral Letter, (which tho' publish'd before my Letter, I had not then seen) has fairly intimated the Doubt which learned Men have entertain'd of the latter. I very well knew, that our worthy Metropolitan was pleas'd to reject them; but then I also knew, that the great Bishop *Bull*, who was excellently well skill'd in Matters of this Nature, says of them, "Nothing is more probable, than that they were taken from the genuine Epistles of St. *Polycarp*, which are lost<sup>k</sup>." However, I desire no Person will lay a greater Stress upon the Evidence taken from these Fragments, than the nature of the thing will bear.

The words, *Patron of Infidelity*, applied to the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, are so hard of Digestion, that he is not even yet reconcil'd

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<sup>g</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 61. *Marg. Note*.

<sup>h</sup> *Cyr. contr. Jul.* l. 6. p. 194, 198, 200. l. 7. p. 235. l. 10. p. 361. *Amm. Mar.* l. 22. c. 1, & 12. l. 25. c. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Def. of the Diff. p. 19. <sup>k</sup> *Bull. Def. Fid. Nic.* p. 52, 53.



concil'd to them; and affirms, that "that Tract  
 " is the farthest off any such thing in the World<sup>1</sup>." Wou'd Assertions do, there's not a more able  
 Writer than this in *Europe*; but as he knows  
 Proof will be insisted on, why has he not at-  
 tempted to make out, either that the Bishop's  
 Quotations from that Book are not to be found  
 in it, or that they no ways countenance Infidel  
 Principles? When he has done either the one or  
 the other of these, I'll undertake to produce yet  
 more Instances of that Author's favouring Infi-  
 delity.

I laid it down as a Fact, That the Gospel ac-  
 cording to the *Hebrews* was distinguish'd by an-  
 cient Writers from the Gospel of St. *Matthew*;  
 and prov'd from *Origen*, that it was not quoted  
 by them as of Authority<sup>m</sup>. This Author, on  
 the contrary, maintains, that they were the same  
 Gospel; and in the *Defence* endeavours at some  
 Proof of it, thus; "*Irenæus* speaking of the E-  
 " bionites, says, they use the Gospel according to  
 " *Matthew* only; and *Eusebius* treating of the  
 " same People, says, they made use of that Go-  
 " spel only which was according to the He-  
 " brews": Hence he concludes, that these two  
 Gospels were one and the same<sup>n</sup>. But his Con-  
 clusion is too hasty. *Origen* informs us, that there  
 were two Sorts of *Ebionites*<sup>o</sup>; might not the one  
 Sort use the Gospel according to the *Hebrews*,  
 the other the Gospel according to St. *Matthew*?  
 Yes, certainly they might; and *Theodorit* expres-  
 sly says they did<sup>p</sup>. *Sandius* speaks of the Gospel  
 of the *Hebrews*, as I shew'd in my former Let-  
 ter<sup>q</sup>; and that it's likely might go by all the  
 Names he mentions; nay farther, it's not impro-  
 bable

<sup>1</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 20.

<sup>m</sup> Lett. to a Lady, p. 114, 115.

<sup>2</sup> Def. of the Diss. p. 24, 25.

<sup>o</sup> Orig. cont. Cels. l. 5. fin. ver.

<sup>p</sup> Theod. Har. Fab. l. 2. de Ebion.

<sup>q</sup> Lett. to a Lady, p. 52.

bable but that some of the Hereticks might also ascribe it to St. *Matthew*, and endeavour to persuade *Jerome* that it was his original *Hebrew Gospel*. But this is not the least Proof, either that our Gospel was taken for that according to the *Hebrews*, or went by different Names. There's no one who has read *the Letter to a Lady*, but may, I think, by the help of these Remarks, answer every Argument contain'd in *the Defence*.

This meek, humble and modest Author, who so lately complain'd of *Language the most vile and abusive* in my Letter, how soft, how mild, how gentle are his following Words! "But why do I name *Argument*, when such who are of his Spirit have so little to do with it? Their Business (now Fire and Faggot are no more in their Power) is to discourage all Examination into Religion." <sup>n</sup> This, notwithstanding I had so fully both at the Beginning and End of the Letter declared my Sentiments for the Liberty of the Press, and had so plainly intimated, *p. 99.* that I was for a free and candid Examination of all Religious Points. In flat Contradiction to the clearest Evidence that can be given of a Man's Temper and Opinion, he here insinuates, that were it left to my Choice, Fire and Faggot would be the only Arguments I should use to convince Men of the Truth of Christianity; and since they, Thanks to Heaven, are not in the Power of the Priesthood here, *my Business is to discourage all Examination into Religion, by misrepresenting the State of the Question, &c.* I leave all who know me to answer this for me; and those who don't, let them judge by what I have wrote. This Author perhaps does not see how easily this Harangue may be applied to himself. "Such who with his Spirit oppose the Authority of  
"the

<sup>n</sup> Def. of the Diff. *p. 71.*

“ the sacred Gospels, and would have us lay aside  
 “ our Bible as useless (tho’ at the same time they  
 are not so kind to substitute a more certain Rule  
 for us in the room hereof, nor to tell us whether  
 they design we should return to the antient Hea-  
 thenism, or live without all publick Regard to  
 the Deity) “ have little to do with Argument.  
 “ Their Business (now they have no *Dioclesian*  
 “ to support them, and Fire and Faggot are out  
 “ of their Power) is to discourage all Examina-  
 “ tion into the Truth and Certainty of the Chri-  
 “ stian Religion, by misrepresenting the State of  
 “ the Question, puzzling the Cause, belying Hea-  
 “ thens and Hereticks, perverting the Fathers  
 “ and Scriptures, *which are always most surely*  
 “ against them, discrediting all they can the Per-  
 “ sons of their Adversaries: In this, and conceal-  
 “ ing the most weighty *Arguments* of those who  
 “ differ from them, lies the whole Merit gene-  
 “ rally of their controversial Performances.” But  
 if you would have a View of this Author’s pecu-  
 liar Manner, it is thus, he struts with an Air of  
 prodigious Superiority in Parts and Reading, cast-  
 ing an Eye of the utmost Disdain on all his Op-  
 ponents, while at the same time he does nothing  
 more than retail a few Scraps of Second-hand  
 Learning picked up from *Sixtus Senensis*, Father  
*Simon*, *Dailleé*, *Toland*, *Letters on Inspiration*, &c.  
 When the Author he quotes is defective, and  
 speaks not home to the Point, he ekes him out,  
 and makes him, as I have shewn in my former Let-  
 ter, particularly p. 44, 45, and 46. Where he  
 wants a Piece of History, he invents it, as he has  
 done in many Places in *the Defence*, and particu-  
 larly in his Account of the *Alogi*, p. 66. And  
 after he has wove a whole Series of Facts entirely  
 from his own Brain, he’d make you believe that  
 could he prevail with himself to tell all ———

but



but even this little he has told, is forc'd from him against his Will, p. 27, 28. (And I dare vouch for it, there's no Man of Learning, who has been at the Trouble to read his Performances, who in the least doubts the Fruitfulness of his Invention this way.) If you prove him mistaken in the Sense of the Authors he quotes, or in his Reasonings from them, this is all nothing but *little Cavils and Criticisms, beneath a Man of Sense*. If you convict him of misrepresenting plain Facts, you are guilty of *Language the most vile and abusive*; and if you demonstrate that he has cited Writers for Words which they never penn'd, and imposes upon you palpable Forgeries, this is *impotent sacerdotal Malice*.

He seems displeas'd with me, p. 69. that I call the Third Pastoral Letter a *complete Performance*; whereas in the Passage referr'd to, I presum'd not to mention my own, but only to give the Opinion of those whom I think much better Judges than myself. If he must have my Thoughts, I assure him it's the perfectest Thing of the Kind I ever read. And notwithstanding the Contempt and Rudeness<sup>o</sup> with which he is pleas'd to treat the Right Reverend Author, I see no Reason yet to alter the very high Esteem and Veneration I have always entertain'd of his Probity, Sense and Learning. What, after all, have any of his Gainsayers to charge him with, unless it be a universal Love to Mankind, an unwearied Application to the Business of his Pastoral Office, a vigilant Care of the Interests of the Established Church, together with an earnest Desire that the present legal Toleration granted to Protestant Dissenters may be inviolably preserv'd? If these indeed are Crimes, no Man more guilty; but if these are Virtues becoming  
a Pre-

<sup>b</sup> Def. p. 4.—21, 22.

a Prelate of our Church, no one ought more highly to be commended.

Notwithstanding this Author's affected Boasts of the great Increase of Deism<sup>p</sup>, I have often told you, and continue still of the same Mind, that I much more fear the Prevalence of Popery. It's well known the Papists turn themselves into all Shapes, and it's not improbable that several of the Deistical Pamphlets, which are at this time spread abroad, come from their Mint. When the Minds of Men are confounded with Arguments for and against the Truth of Christianity, and are in a wavering unsettled State, they hope for a plentiful Harvest; and if I am rightly inform'd, they seduce too many such to their Profession at this Time.

From the whole of this Letter, you see the Necessity of following the Advice I have always given you; which is, that in all Controversies wherein Antiquity is concerned, you take nothing upon Trust from modern Writers, but have immediate Recourse to the Originals themselves, and form your Judgment from the best Evidence you can thence collect. He that impartially follows this Rule, will, I doubt not, entertain right Sentiments, as well of the Authority of the several Books, as of the Doctrines contain'd in the New Testament. I heartily rejoice that you have found the Benefit of this Method, and profess Christianity on the justest Grounds. That you may always live answerably to it, and reap the happy Fruits of it, is the hearty Prayer of,

*Your sincerest Friend,*

*And humble Servant.*



*Lately Publish'd,*

1. **A** Letter to a Lady; wherein the Canonical Authority of *St. Matthew's Gospel* is defended; the Bishop of *London's Third Pastoral Letter* vindicated; and the Misrepresentations and Forgeries contain'd in a late Pamphlet, entitled, *A Dissertation or Enquiry concerning the Canonical Authority of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and the Reasons upon which it hath been anciently rejected by Hereticks*, are laid open to the meanest Capacity.

2. The pretended Difficulties in Natural or Reveal'd Religion no Excuse for Infidelity. Sixteen Sermons preach'd in the Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow, London*, in the Years 1721 and 1722, at the Lecture founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle, Esq.* By *Brampton Gurdon*, A. M. Archdeacon of *Sudbury*. To which is subjoin'd, A Defence of the Christian Religion from the Prophecies of the Old Testament.

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WHEREAS a Volume of Practical Discourses by the late Reverend *B. Carter, D. D.* Vicar of *West-Ham in Essex*, were printed for the Benefit of his Widow, who thereby received a very seasonable Relief: This is to give Notice, That she being lately dead, and a small Number left unsold, they may be bought of *Robert Knaplock* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, at Five Shillings per Book.

*At the same Shop may be had,*

Bishop *Leng's* Translation of *Jully's Offices*, his Sixteen Sermons at *Mr. Boyle's Lecture*; and *Mr. Bullock's* Sermons at *Hackney*, with the Defence of them against *Mr. Collins* and *Dr. Tindal*.



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of the said, they may be bought of A. S.  
Assisted in St. Paul's Church-yard, at Five Shil-  
lings per Book.

By the same Shopman is sold  
Bishop Low's Translation of Watts's Office  
his Sermons are now in the Press, and  
the said Sermons at London, with the B.  
of the said Sermons, by the same Shopman.

